NUMBER 2

DALGODA

$1.50 ($1.95 IN CANADA)

BY JAN STRNAD AND DENNIS FUJITAKE

Beginning this issue:
GRIMWOOD'S DAUGHTER
by Jan Strnad & Kevin Nowlan

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

DALGODA™

No. 2 December, 1984

INTRODUCTION BY JAN STRNAD

Hello, and welcome to the second issue of *Dalgoda*.

The theme this issue is "hostile vegetables." Since *Dalgoda* is meant to be an educational book, I've suggested a simple but effective method of dealing with aggressive shrubbery (see page 20 of "A Tendril Embrace"). And, so that even the most casual reader doesn't miss the lesson, I've repeated the example on page seven of "Grimwood's Daughter." Notice that the technique has retained its effectiveness over the centuries and works well for canine aliens and elves alike...and you, if you're similarly afflicted.

I'd like to clear up a point from my biography in *Dal* #1. Specifically, I'm addressing the comment that I "...became a devoted Marvel fan with *Fantastic Four* #1." This is true—the early Marvel super-hero books knocked my socks off because they were so *different*, and I still buy the monthly reprints of Ditko's *Spider-Man* issues. But when Ditko left *Spider-Man*, the artists who replaced him never quite captured the moodiness...the *otherliness*...of the character, and I eventually stopped buying the book. Around that same period of time, Marvel's books in general began losing their appeal for me, and they've never gotten the old magic back. For one thing, they aren't *different* any more—they've become the victims of their own success.

Instead, when I go comic book shopping, I find myself drawn more and more frequently to the alternative titles. This is where the action is, where the creators are less concerned with attempts to recreate the past and *more* involved in establishing a *new* milieu, one without a built-in audience of hundreds of thousands of readers. And because of the low press runs for unusual material, much of it is printed in black-and-white. The occasional book, like *Elfquest*, works its way up to a respectable circulation without color; most don't, because the lack of color *in itself* limits the audience.

So this is a plea: give the black-and-white books a try. You might start with *Love and Rockets*. It's on *my* must-buy list and it's published by Fantagraphics Books. (You'd think they'd send their star comic book writer one for free, but no-o-o-o. I pay full retail like everybody else...and it's *worth* it!) And there are other good ones, too, so shop around.

This issue of *Dalgoda* we're welcoming *Kevin Nowlan* aboard as artist of the back-up feature, "Grimwood's Daughter." Kevin and Grimwood will be with us for the next five issues. Because of the very organic nature of the story and art, we've enlisted letterer *Phil Felix* to make sure the words harmonize with the pictures. Kevin and Phil are both doing a great job and have kept the Prime Directive well in mind—*"Make the writer look good!"*

Thanks, guys...really!

PERSONNEL

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KENNETH SMITH	colorist

GARY GROTH	editor
PEPPY WHITE	design
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Somewhere in space, a race of canines is losing its fight for survival. The *Canidans* battle valiantly, but the odds against them are overwhelming. In six months' time the invading *Nimp* will reach Canida itself.

One Canidan alone has escaped—*Dalgoda*, racing across 36 light years of space to the planet Earth. His mode of transport—the only spaceship in the known universe capable of travel through subspace.

A bargain has been struck: the secret of Dalgoda's ship in trade for Earth's support in Canida's war against the Nimp.

The challenge: to build an effective subspace armada in less than six months.

The dilemma: who on Earth can be trusted . . . if anyone?

Attention, Transpod Freighter PETV-6080. . . you are off your docking vector! Repeat. . . you are off your docking vector! Adjust course for Docking Bay D—Delta. . . repeat, D—Delta! You are off-vector!

CODEX

BAY A. BAY B. BAY C. BAY D. BAY E. BAY F.

G-7

Transpod Freighter PETV-6080. . . please respond! Repeat. . . you are vectored on an occupied bay! Adjust vector to open Bay D—Delta! Do you copy?

61

TRANSPOD

If you are unable to properly conduct your vessel, activate central computer control! Damn it, you're headed for the wrong bay!

Override him, Posey!

2 CHING

5 RAVENCRA

I can't! He won't relinquish control! He's got us locked out!

There's nothing I can do. He's going to crash. Batten the hatches.

7 CROCK

Close Bay B—Beta. Sound crash alert.

And make a note for the record—the sonofabitch'n pilot is *drunk*!

Crash alert! Abandon bay area! Crash alert! All personnel... abandon bay area! This is an emergency crash alert!

KEEERRUNN

KARUMP

Gunner. . . the exit's this way! What're you *doing*?
I *know* that ship . . . and I know the *pilot*! And so help me, he's going to *pay* for this!
GRUMMAN
C-7
"Posey? Posey? Are you all right?"
Posey? Can you hear me? You're mumbling in your sleep again. Are you all right?
You were talking about the "sun on the beach" again. Was it that same nightmare? Are you awake now?

Uhh-mm . . . yeah. Yeah—the same old dream. Thanks.
Sorry I dozed off. Are we about there?
I think so. Listen . . . I got a message from Frank Brown—remember, the secret service agent? They found out who sent the kill-drone after me.
It was some group called "EFE." He said to ask you about them.
EFE—Earth for Earthlings! A bunch of ultra-right-wing isolationists—don't think much of Canidans. Members in very high places. I should've guessed. But how'd they find out about *you*?
They had a spy in the military, close to the World Security Council. He was on the plane with Rand Kneedam when they flew out to meet me.
BOEING
NASA
Ha! That's a good one on Rand! Right in his own high-level jet! Do they have the spy in custody?
No, Frank says EFE knew the spy's cover was blown so they took care of him themselves. What's a concrete necktie?
PLAYBOY

"Something you don't get at Macy's."

Hey . . . look! We're passing by your new fleet!

Where?!

Gods help me! You . . . you can't mean those *derelicts* are my promised armada!

Afraid so. Everything else is in service, well beyond recall in a mere six months. Those ships out there are all we have to work with.

TWA

DELTA

No wonder Rand didn't want to come with us. I'd be embarrassed, too, if that's how I honored my contracts.

Excuse me, Dal. I have to make a pit stop before we dock at Station Dora.

This is hopeless. Me and a bunch of *junkers* against the Nimp—Canida doesn't have a prayer.

Pardon me, sir . . . but, you're one of those *dog*-people, aren't you? Might I have a word with you?

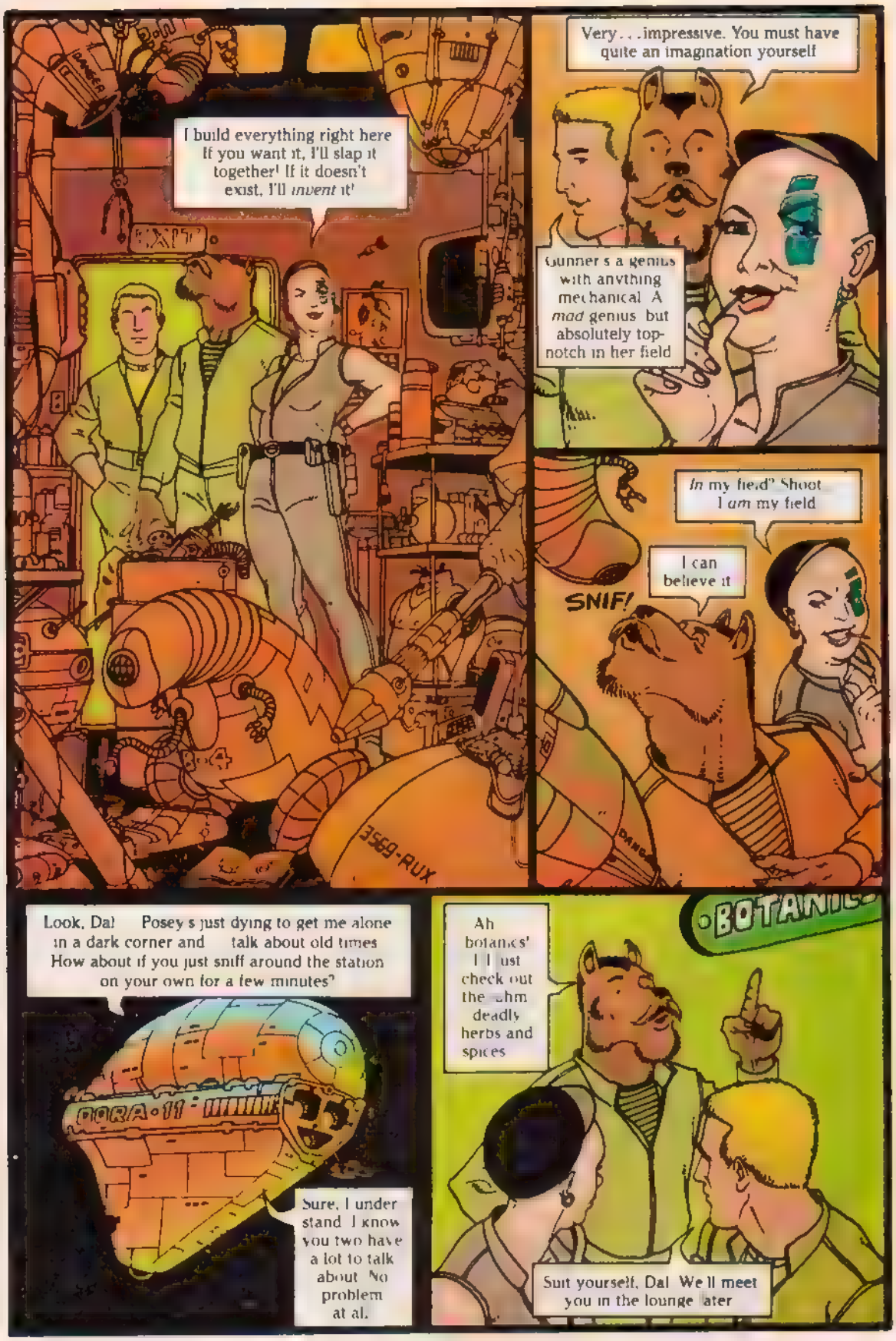
I'm from Canida, yes.
I thought so. My name is "Wallader"—Edwin Wallader. I'm a botanist. My specialty is off-world... that is, off-*Earth*... flora. One of my particular interests involves the colony on *Reg-7*....
Early in the colony's history... no sooner had they landed, actually, when they were plagued with a sudden wave of rather baffling *dog deaths*....
Please, Mr. Wallader, don't bother to continue! I don't know anything at all about your Earthly canine species! Just because my distant ancestors....
No no no... you misunderstand! What I'm wanting to know is if you... that is, your *people* ...you *Canidans*...
...if you have any experience with cynophobic flora of the genus *Mobilis*, species *strangulatum*—the so-called "walking chokeweed"...?
Gods, no! It sounds dreadful! What is it?
Not a *bad* plant, really. Only a trifle... misguided. The Mobilis is very *energetic*, you might say...
...very nutritionally demanding. And when it's exhausted the soil in *one* area...

"When colonists began finding their dogs dead, always at the feet of a Mobilis, it didn't take them long to decide that the plants were *strangling* the poor animals. The question is... *why*? Mobilis has never been known to attack any other living creature!"
"...it picks up its roots and moves on! Very clever, I'd say, for a mindless vegetable. A giant migratory variety flourishes on Reg-7."
I just thought...seeing you on board...that perhaps you'd dealt with a similar phenomenon on your home planet....
No, luckily! We have absolutely nothing like that on Canida.
Oh. I see. Well, more's the pity.
Perhaps we'll have time for a chat on Station Dora, eh? I'm sure we'd find some common ground in the deadly *herbs* or the parasitic *fungi*....
No doubt. Pleasure to meet you.
Plants that strangle dogs! Gods...Canida seems more like paradise every minute! Maybe if I take a nap I'll dream about being back home...!

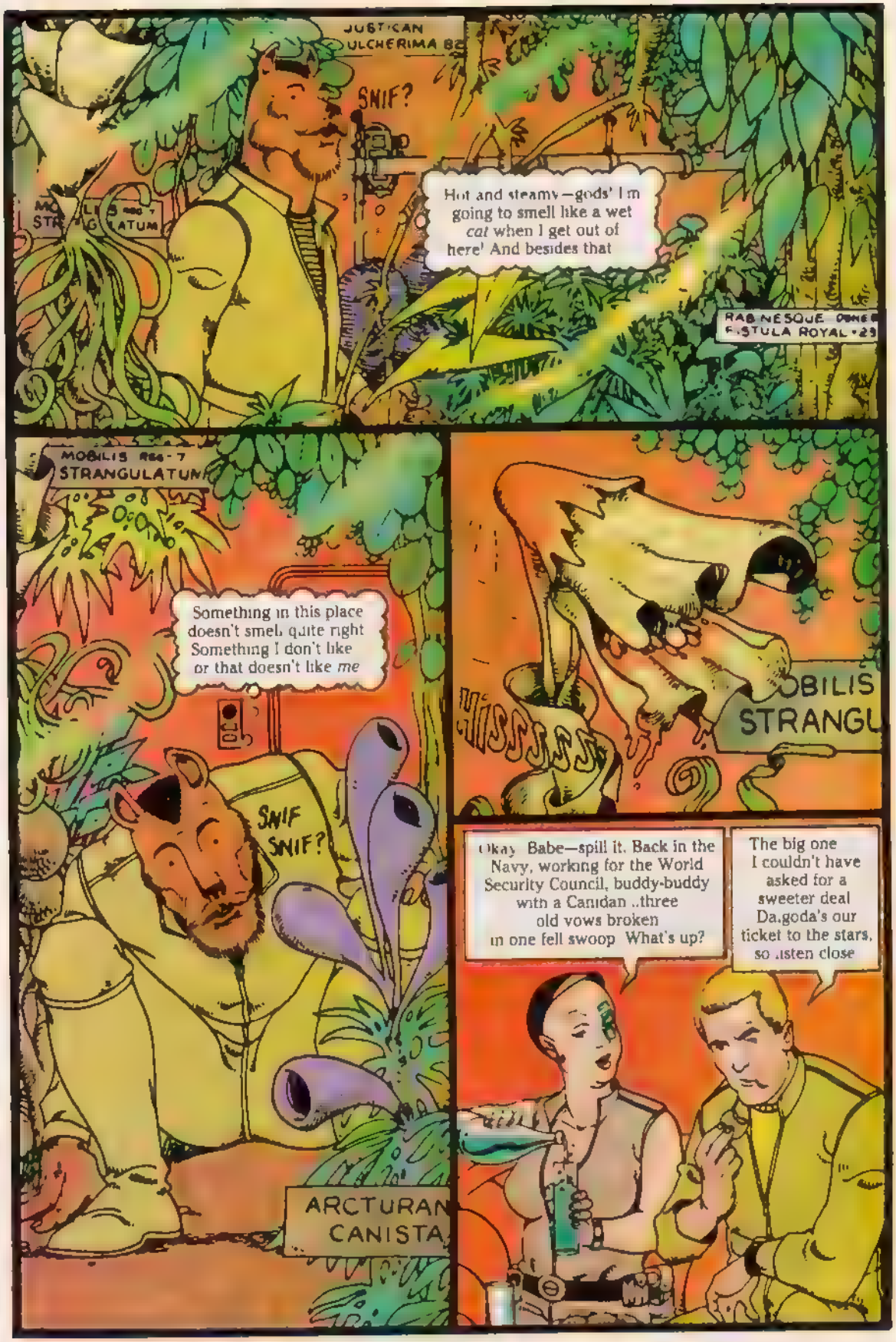
Drunk! That's what he said I was. . . *drunk*! Why would he make an accusation like that if he wasn't out to wash me up?
Well, Victor, the tests backed him up. They showed an alcohol level far exceeding
Tests, tests, *tests*—I don't give a damn what the tests showed! I'm telling you I hadn't touched a drop!
Look. . this was my last chance to make it as a pilot. I was on probation already Do you think I'd be stupid enough to get tanked just before *docking*?
I was *drugged*, Randy. It was a plot to ground me, and it worked Somebody set me up, and somebody's going to answer for it!
Starting with Posey Ravencraft.
He's in on it, of course. He's one of *them*, whoever they are! Otherwise he could've been *bought*!
Look, Victor, just because he couldn't be bribed into changing his testimony, that doesn't mean he's part of some plot. Maybe he's just honest
Don't make me laugh Somebody was paying him more that's all

Randy my boy you re *in* with Ravencraft now You can find out who he was working for Why d they set me up' Why d they want me out" And once you get me their lying scheming *names*
we ll wreck every blessed one of them *especially*
Posey'
Sh
Here, sweetheart—let me put some *color* in those cheeks'
SLAP
Thanks, *sweetheart.* Here's a little something for *yours.*
SHOT
POSEY RAVENCRAFT!

Lord it's good to see you again! I thought they'd tied you to the ground to rot! Just wait'll I get *you* in the float room!
Float room?
Dal' This is Gunner Hathaway an old friend of mine.
Gunner, meet Dalgoda. He's here on special assignment...working with the World Security Council
Pleased to meet you, Ms. Hathaway Any friend of Posey's
Oh, we're a lot more than that.. Posey's just a little inhibited in public But get him in the float room and need I say more?
Well, actually, I've never *been* to a float room before Perhaps later the three of us might ?
The *three* of us! Priceless! Ha-ha! You're all right Dalgoda! You've got *imagination*!
Let me show you *my* place We'll save the fun stuff for later!
and this is where it all happens— my *workroom*! Pretty snazzy, eh?


I build everything right here If you want it, I'll slap it together! If it doesn't exist, I'll *invent* it!
EXIT
3569-RUX
Very . . . impressive. You must have quite an imagination yourself
Gunner's a genius with anything mechanical. A *mad* genius, but absolutely top-notch in her field.
In my field? Shoot. I *am* my field.
I can believe it.
SNIF!
Look, Dal. Posey's just dying to get me alone in a dark corner and... talk about old times. How about if you just sniff around the station on your own for a few minutes?
DORA-11
Sure, I understand. I know you two have a lot to talk about. No problem at all.
BOTANICS
Ah, botanics! I'll just check out the... uhm... deadly herbs and spices.
Suit yourself, Dal. We'll meet you in the lounge later.

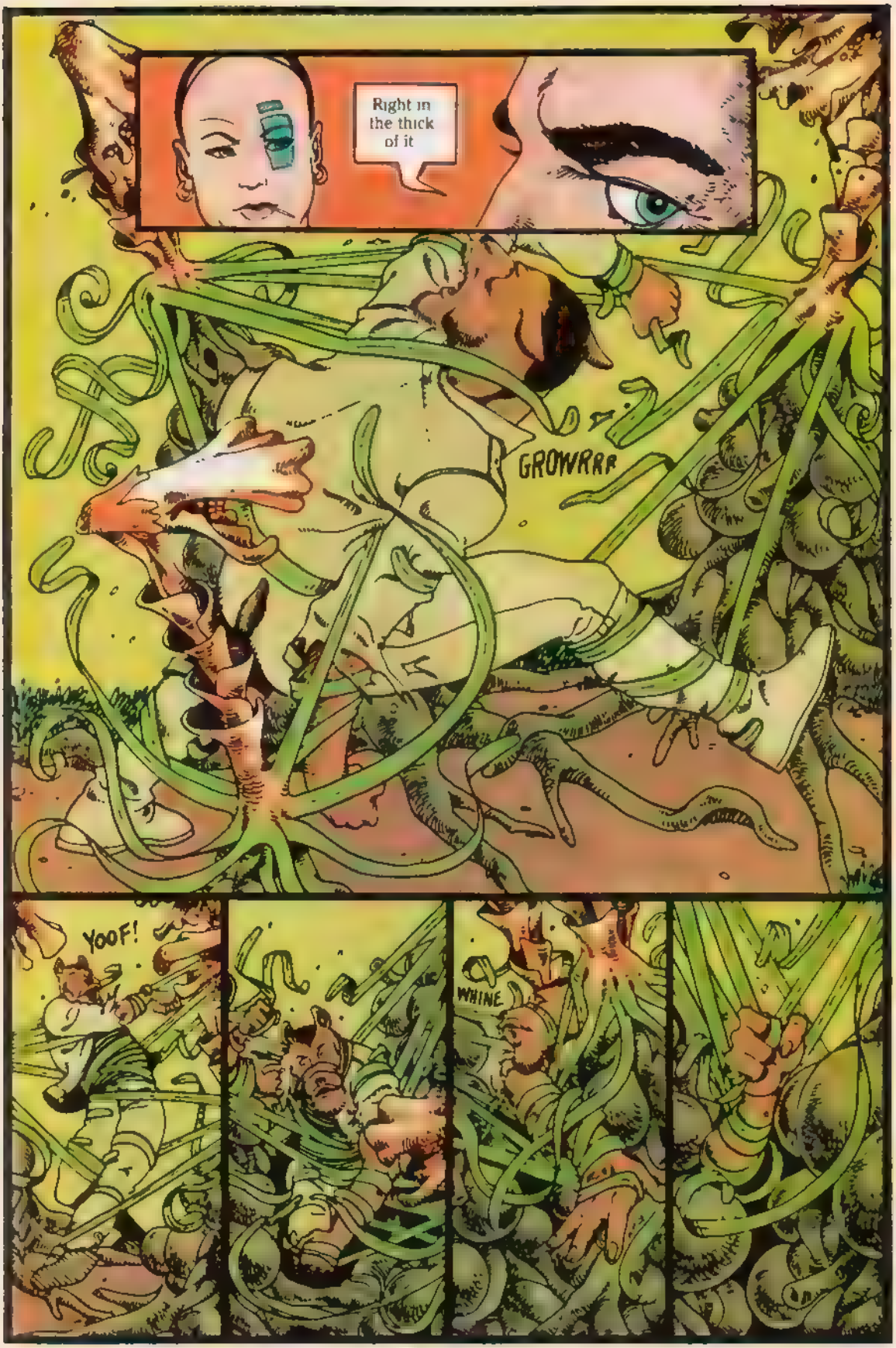
Hey, Posey—remember that crater-hopper I put together for the Mars team?
Remember? I practically busted my neck on one of those blamed things!
You think it's okay to leave him in there by himself?
Oh sure—as long as he doesn't hike his leg on the plants!
I hardly consider that a likelihood, Ms Hathaway.
Uh!
Good ears on that boy.
Hoo!


SNIF?
Hot and steamy—gods! I'm going to smell like a wet *cat* when I get out of here! And besides that
MOBILIS RES-7 STRANGULATUM
Something in this place doesn't smell quite right Something I don't like or that doesn't like *me*
SNIF SNIF?
ARCTURAN CANISTA
HISSSSS
Okay Babe—spill it. Back in the Navy, working for the World Security Council, buddy-buddy with a Canidan ..three old vows broken in one fell swoop What's up?
The big one I couldn't have asked for a sweeter deal Da.goda's our ticket to the stars, so .isten close

After I left the Navy I realized what a mistake I'd made. I re-upped, even though space service was a closed door at the time. I knew I'd find *some* way back in. Then Dal dropped in my lap
He's on an emergency mission for Canida. Somehow he has to turn those floating derelicts out there into an impressive war fleet. . .and you and I are going to help him do it. Rand Kneedam's supervising
. . .but that can work to our advantage. I tell you—a lot of people are going to feel our fingers on their *throats* before this is over
SSSS
YIPE!

UNGH!
SCCRREEE
GROWR!
SCKEEOUU
CHOMP

Gods! That must have been one of those dog-hating brutes the little round man was telling me about! But if they keep *one* of the stinking things up here there *must* be
SKEEOUUU
PTUU
more!
Victor Kneedam was drunk and they *knew* it. But they yanked his license and let him off with a reprimand, just because his old man's an admiral! He should've been *crucified* for what he did!
I'm put in geosynchronous orbit with the rest of the flotsam. Okay—we've got scores to settle. So where does the dog-man come in?
Instead, Victor gets his hand slapped, and a few weeks later, I'm relieved of space detail and relegated Earthside for R&O!* And *you*
*Rest and Observation


Right in the thick of it
GROWRRR
YOOF!
WHINE

Please excuse the interruption But I was wondering if either of you gentlemen might have seen the Canadian
He's having a look around the botanics lab why?
Dear heavens The Mobilis strangulatum!
Beats me! I just don't like the way he said it
Mobilis a thief! What's he talking about?
SKREEEEEE
YAAAAAAHH!

WHUNG
UNNGT!
GHUK

Oh my! My poor *Mobilis* Please be gentle!
SMOK
Oh my
Dog-haters They've sent me to a world of *dog-haters*! The people... the plants ...*everything* around here hates *dogs*!
There there! Dat don't take it so personally. It was just a quirk, that's all. Earth *loves* dogs.
I'd'll know, Posey. EFF killer plants... junk for a fleet. I have to tell you...
I'm having serious doubts about the feasibility of this mission.

Now . . that's your nerves talking You've been through a very trying experience. You just need a bit of relaxation. Right, Gunner?
Right! You just have to unwind a little
FLOAT ROOM
·LEVEL 1
CAFETERIA
·LEVEL 2
GYMNASIUM
END

In "I Walked With a Zombdroid, Dalgoda, Posey and Gunner journey to the space station where Dal's fleet is being assembled —only to be attacked by a vengeful, undead monster! And what the hell is Victor Kneedam doing back in space, anyway?

Story by **STRNAD**
Art by **FUJITAKE**
Coloring by **SMITH**

1984 Jo Strnad & Dennis Fujitake

GRIMWOOD'S DAUGHTER

Will the elves decide to continue the war on mankind against hopeless odds? Also: Introducing Bnii, the Spirit of the Forest!

Story by **STRNAD**
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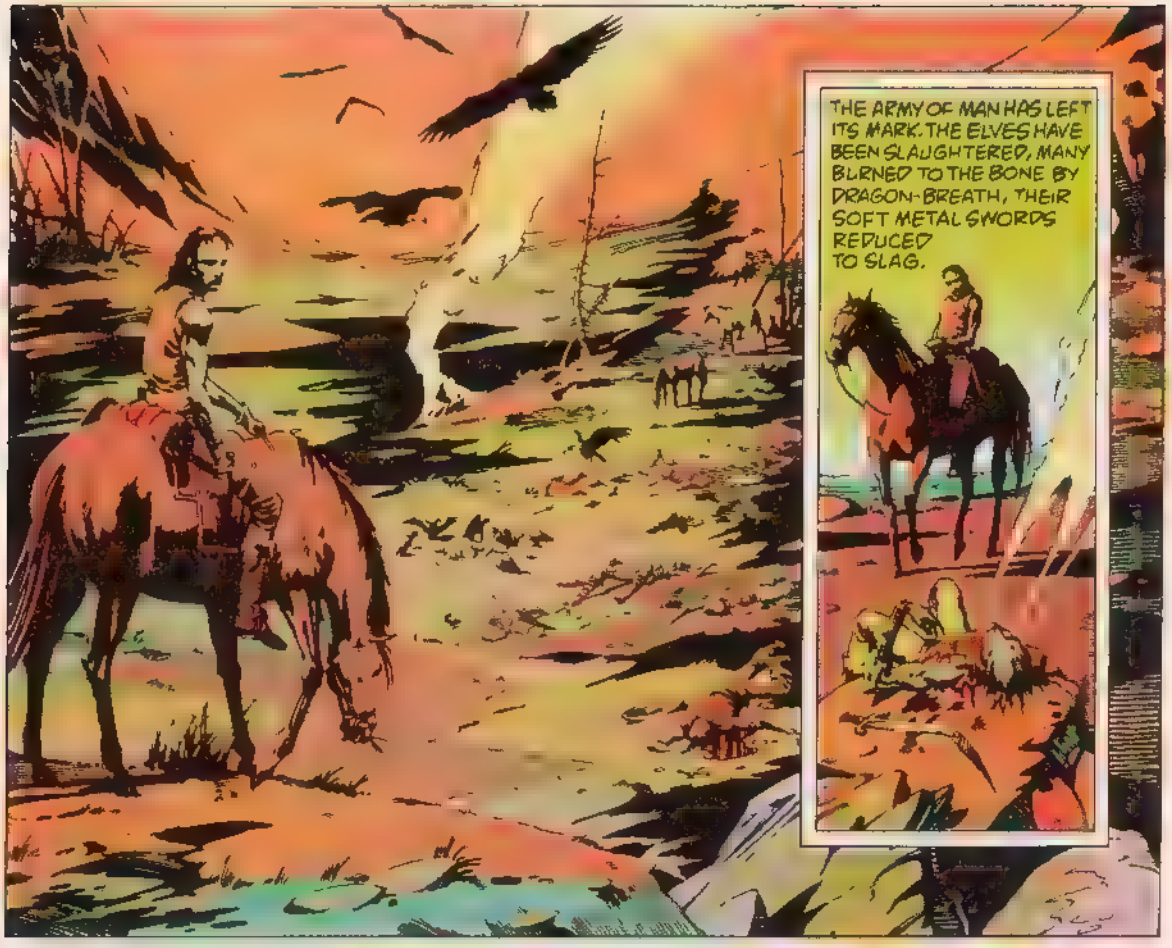
GRIMWOOD'S DAUGHTER

WRITTEN BY JAN STRNAD • ILLUSTRATED BY KEVIN NOWLAN
COLORED BY KEN SMITH • LETTERED BY PHIL FELIX • EDITED BY GARY GROTH

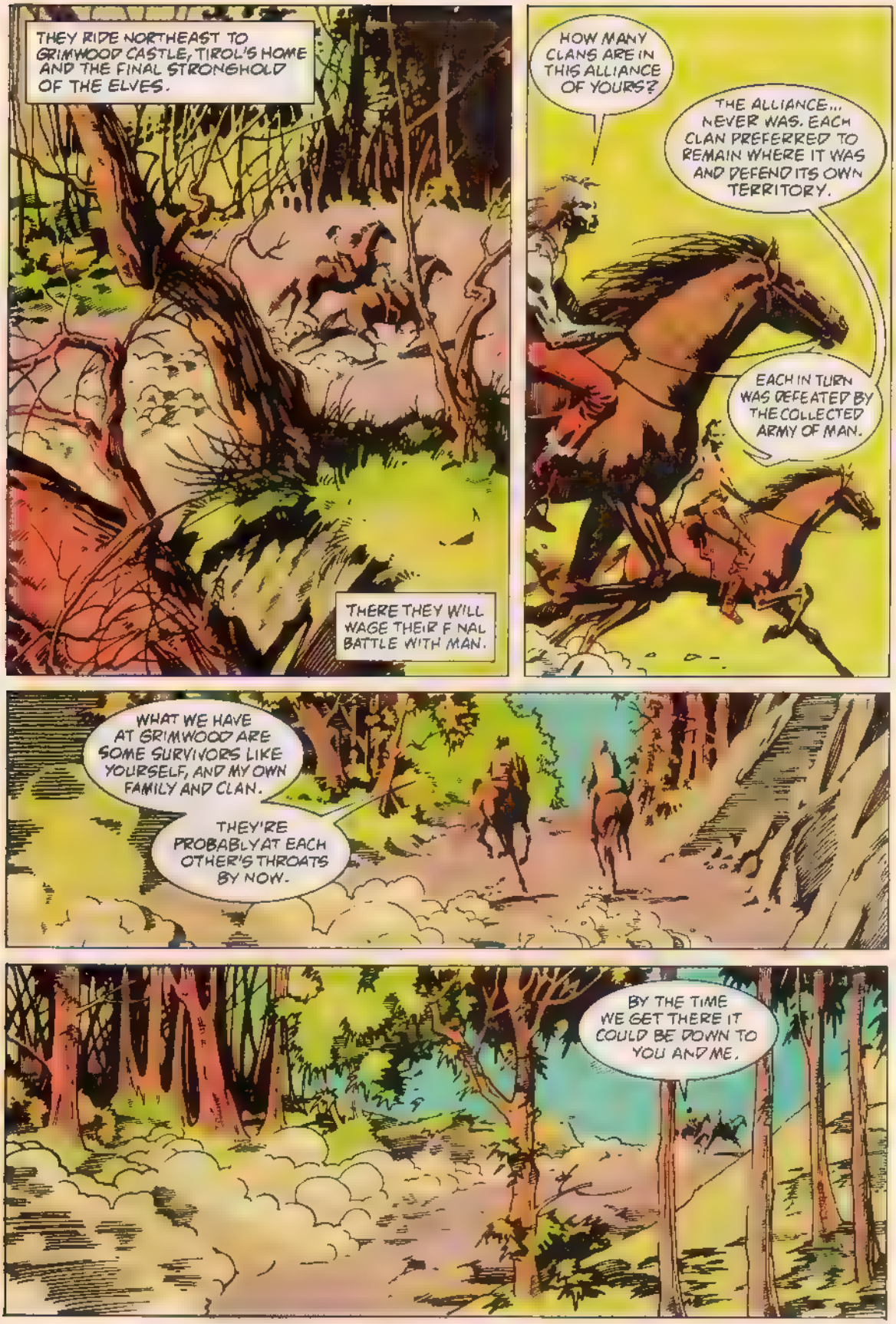
THE ELFIN WAR WITH MAN IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE. TIROL OF GRIMWOOD HAS RIDDEN FAR TO SOLICIT THE HELP OF A RIVAL CLAN, ONLY TO FIND THAT HE HAS ARRIVED TOO LATE.


THE ARMY OF MAN HAS LEFT ITS MARK. THE ELVES HAVE BEEN SLAUGHTERED, MANY BURNED TO THE BONE BY DRAGON-BREATH, THEIR SOFT METAL SWORDS REDUCED TO SLAG.

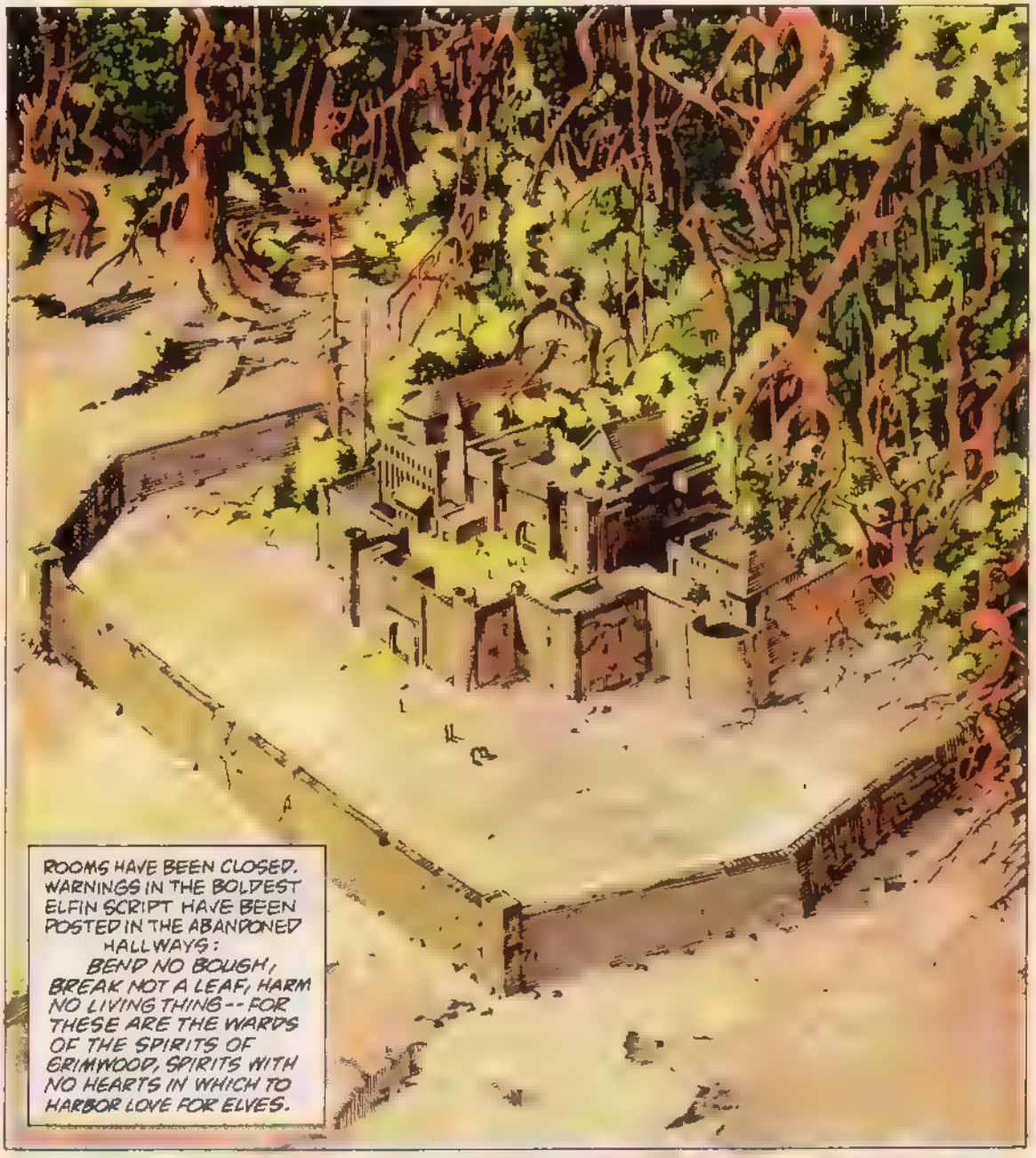
TIROL HAS SEEN THIS SIGHT MANY TIMES IN HIS JOURNEY. THE SMELL, THE SQUAWKING OF THE SCAVENGER BIRDS, THE CHITTERING OF THE INSECTS COME TO FEED ON THE DEAD--TIROL KNOWS THESE THINGS TOO WELL.
AHEAD OF HIM, SOMETHING MOVES

A SURVIVOR!
SO YOU'VE COME, I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN A MEMBER OF THE GRIMWOOD CLAN WOULD COME TO GLOAT OVER OUR DEFEAT! DISMOUNT AND FIGHT ME, AND BE RID OF US ALL!

DO YOU REALLY THINK I ENJOY THIS? I BEGGED THE FIRE-CLAN TO JOIN THE ALLIANCE AND YOU REFUSED; NOW SEE WHAT THE ARMY OF MAN HAS DONE
LAY DOWN YOUR SWORD, COUSIN, AND TALK WITH ME AS A FRIEND
THE SWORD FALLS TO THE GROUND. AMID THE DUST THE STENCH OF DEATH BLOWN ON EVERY WIND, A FEUD OF SEVERAL CENTURIES' STANDING IS SET ASIDE, AND THE TWO ELVES TALK AS BROTHERS.
THEY ARE BARBARIANS, TIROL, UNBELIEVABLY SAVAGE. THEIR NUMBER CANNOT BE GUESSED. AND THE DRAGONS...!
THEY SWOOP DOWN BREATHING FIRE, BURNING HUMAN AND ELF ALIKE! BUT WE ARE SO FEW AND THERE ARE ALWAYS MORE MEN TO REPLACE THE FALLEN.
WHAT OF YOUR CHILDREN AND THE REST OF THE CLAN? I'VE HEARD RUMORS OF..
.. DEATHROOT! THE MEN FLEW OVER BEFORE THE BATTLE, DROPPING IT FROM THE SKIES ...AT FIRST WE IGNORED IT, BUT WHEN WE SAW THEIR ARMY... WELL, SOME TOOK THE ROOT OR GAVE IT TO THEIR CHILDREN.
IT DOESN'T MATTER. IT'S A MERCY, PROBABLY.
LET'S GO, COUSIN.
THIS PLACE STINKS

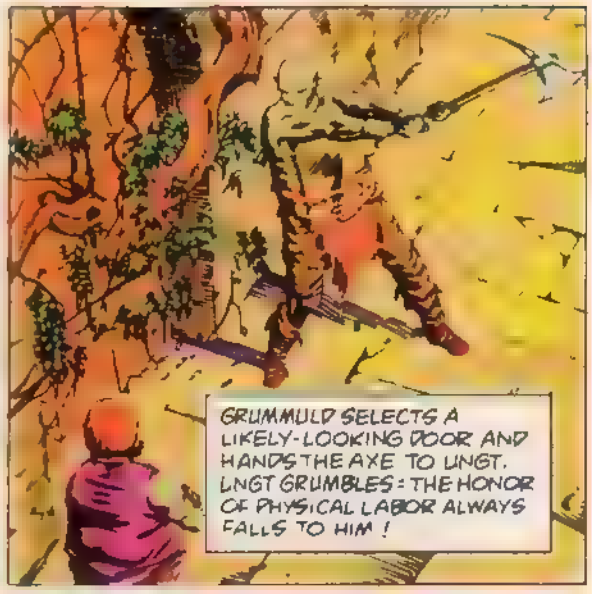

THEY RIDE NORTHEAST TO GRIMWOOD CASTLE, TIROL'S HOME AND THE FINAL STRONGHOLD OF THE ELVES.
THERE THEY WILL WAGE THEIR F NAL BATTLE WITH MAN.
HOW MANY CLANS ARE IN THIS ALLIANCE OF YOURS?
THE ALLIANCE... NEVER WAS. EACH CLAN PREFERRED TO REMAIN WHERE IT WAS AND DEFEND ITS OWN TERRITORY.
EACH IN TURN WAS DEFEATED BY THE COLLECTED ARMY OF MAN.
WHAT WE HAVE AT GRIMWOOD ARE SOME SURVIVORS LIKE YOURSELF, AND MY OWN FAMILY AND CLAN.
THEY'RE PROBABLY AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS BY NOW.
BY THE TIME WE GET THERE IT COULD BE DOWN TO YOU AND ME.

SITUATED ON THE EDGE OF THE KNOWN, HABITABLE WORLD, GRIMWOOD CASTLE ONCE STOOD APART FROM THE ANCIENT FOREST FOR WHICH IT WAS NAMED. OVER THE CENTURIES THE FOREST INEXORABLY FOLDED THE CASTLE IN TS LEAFY EMBRACE, UNTIL NOW, THE TWO HAVE BECOME ONE.


ROOMS HAVE BEEN CLOSED. WARNINGS IN THE BOLDEST ELFIN SCRIPT HAVE BEEN POSTED IN THE ABANDONED HALLWAYS:
BEND NO BOUGH, BREAK NOT A LEAF, HARM NO LIVING THING -- FOR THESE ARE THE WARDS OF THE SPIRITS OF GRIMWOOD, SPIRITS WITH NO HEARTS IN WHICH TO HARBOR LOVE FOR ELVES.

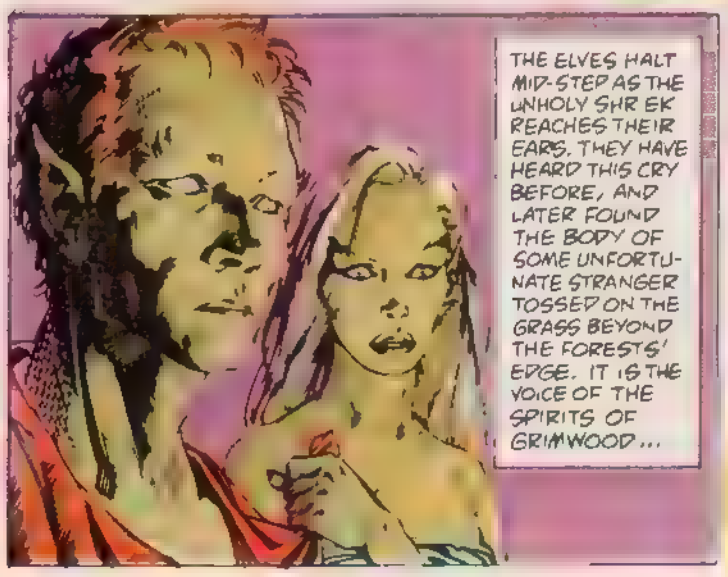
THE TWO SPRIGGANS (ELVISH THIEVES) GRUMMULD AND UNGT, DO NOT BELIEVE IN SIGNS. THEIR WISDOM TELLS THEM: THE HARSHER THE WARNING, THE RICHER IS THE TREASURE IT PROTECTS!

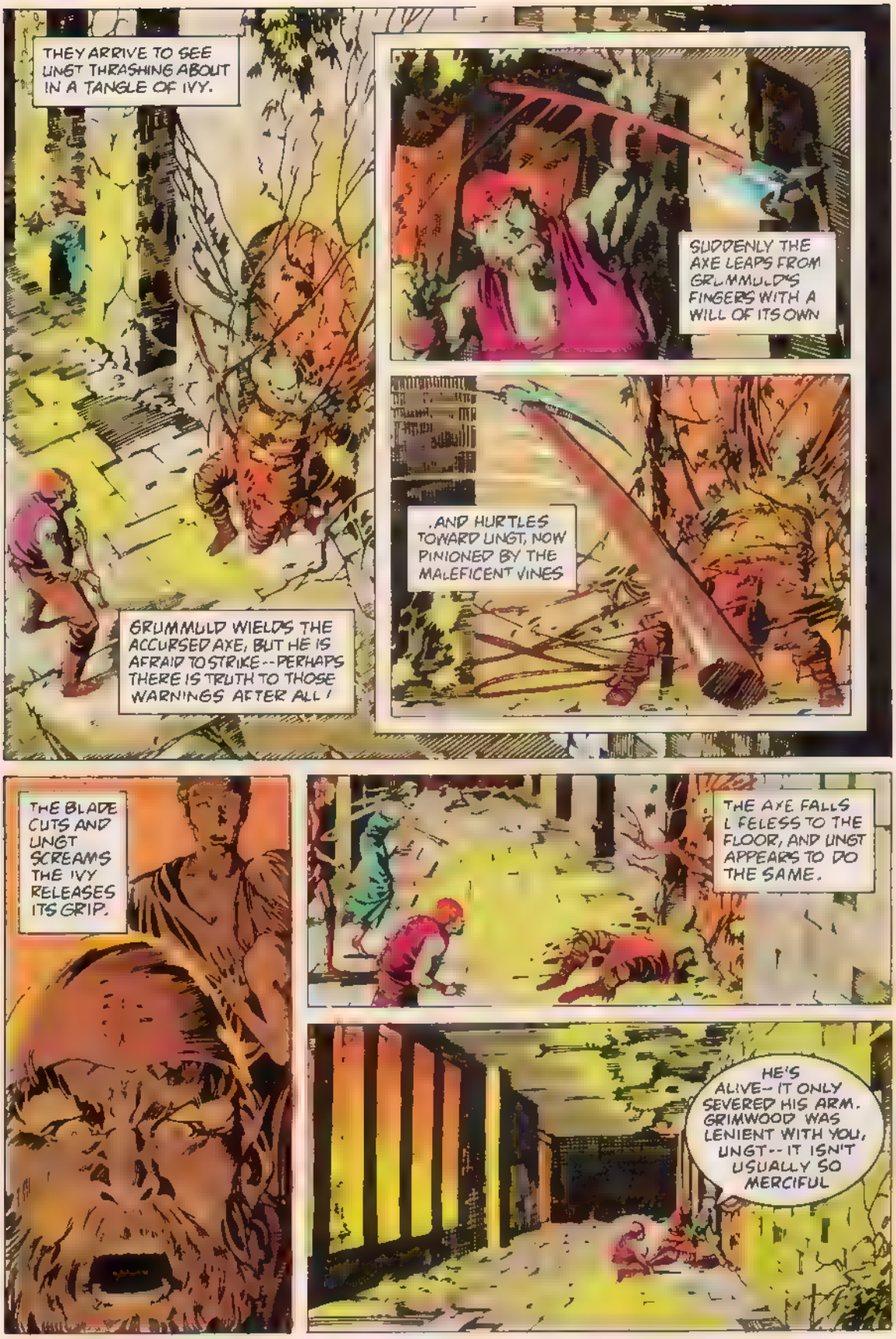
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, GRUMMULD. WHERE IS THERE TO TAKE THE TREASURE ONCE WE STEAL IT?
WE'RE NOT HERE TO STEAL, IDIOT, ONLY TO LOCATE
WHEN THE BATTLE WITH MAN IS OVER- OR VERY NEARLY SO--THEN WE WILL COME TO CLAIM OUR PAY!

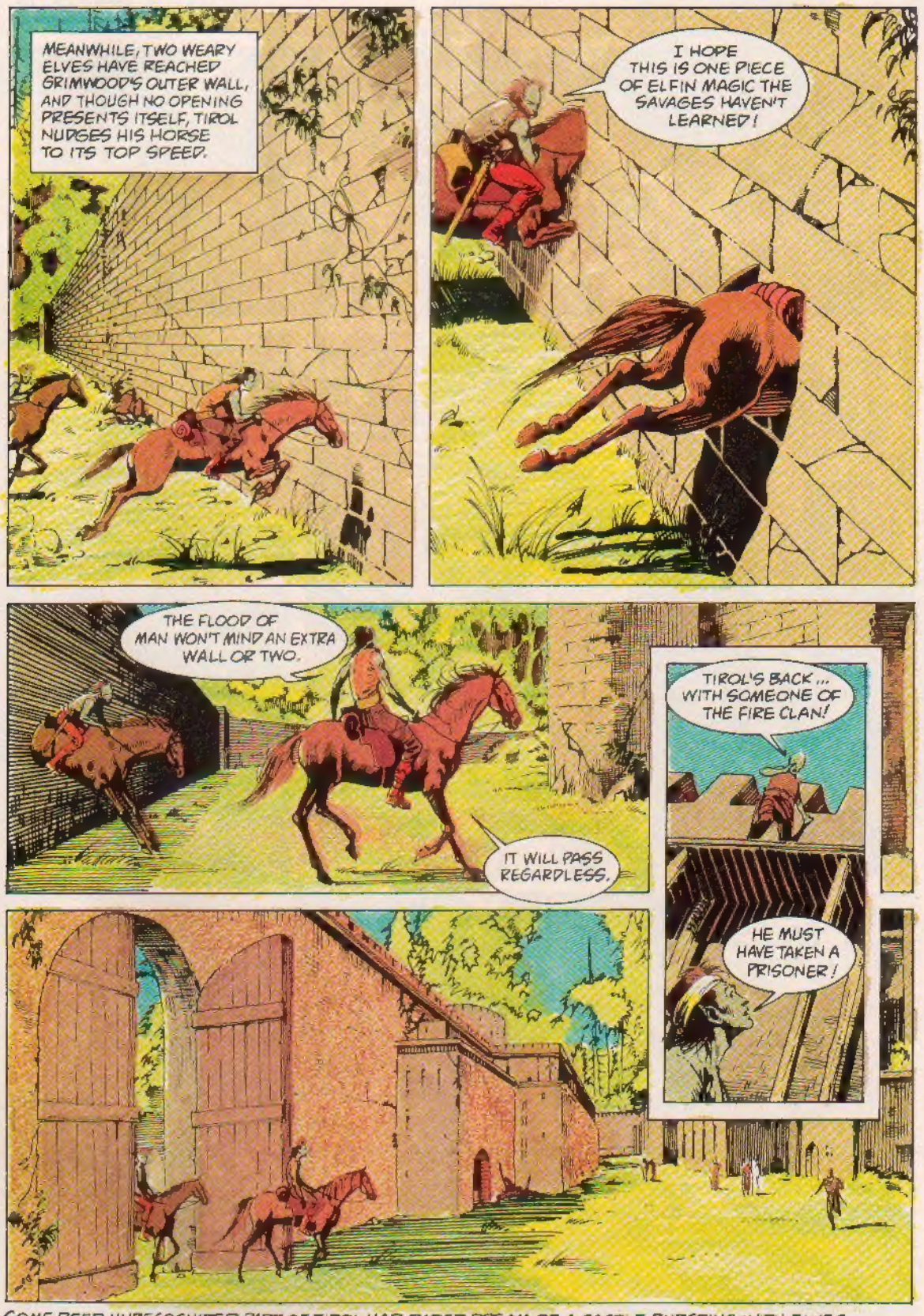

GRUMMULD SELECTS A LIKELY-LOOKING DOOR AND HANDS THE AXE TO UNGT. UNGT GRUMBLES: THE HONOR OF PHYSICAL LABOR ALWAYS FALLS TO HIM!

THE AXE CUTS DEEPLY INTO THE DARK IVY, AND GRUMMULD AND UNGT FALL BACK. A TORTURED SCREAM RUNS UP THEIR SPINES AND ECHOES DOWN THE LONG CORRIDOR!

I KNEW IT WAS A MISTAKE TO ADMIT THOSE TWO! WHO KNOWS WHERE THEY'VE GONE OFF, IN SEARCH OF SOMETHING TO STEAL, I'M SURE!
WE'LL NEED EVERY ELF WE CAN GET IN THE BATTLE, EVEN THE SPRIGGANS. UNTIL THEN, OUR BIGGEST JOB IS GOING TO BE PROTECTING THEM FROM THEMSELVES


THE ELVES HALT MID-STEP AS THE UNHOLY SHRIEK REACHES THEIR EARS. THEY HAVE HEARD THIS CRY BEFORE, AND LATER FOUND THE BODY OF SOME UNFORTUNATE STRANGER TOSSED ON THE GRASS BEYOND THE FORESTS' EDGE. IT IS THE VOICE OF THE SPIRITS OF GRIMWOOD...


THEY ARRIVE TO SEE UNGT THRASHING ABOUT IN A TANGLE OF IVY.
GRUMMULD WIELDS THE ACCURSED AXE, BUT HE IS AFRAID TO STRIKE--PERHAPS THERE IS TRUTH TO THOSE WARNINGS AFTER ALL!
SUDDENLY THE AXE LEAPS FROM GRUMMULD'S FINGERS WITH A WILL OF ITS OWN
..AND HURTLES TOWARD UNGT, NOW PINIONED BY THE MALEFICENT VINES
THE BLADE CUTS AND UNGT SCREAMS THE IVY RELEASES ITS GRIP.
THE AXE FALLS LIFELESS TO THE FLOOR, AND UNGT APPEARS TO DO THE SAME.
HE'S ALIVE--IT ONLY SEVERED HIS ARM. GRIMWOOD WAS LENIENT WITH YOU, UNGT--IT ISN'T USUALLY SO MERCIFUL


MEANWHILE, TWO WEARY ELVES HAVE REACHED GRIMWOOD'S OUTER WALL, AND THOUGH NO OPENING PRESENTS ITSELF, TIROL NUDGES HIS HORSE TO ITS TOP SPEED.
I HOPE THIS IS ONE PIECE OF ELFIN MAGIC THE SAVAGES HAVEN'T LEARNED!
THE FLOOD OF MAN WON'T MIND AN EXTRA WALL OR TWO.
IT WILL PASS REGARDLESS.
TIROL'S BACK... WITH SOMEONE OF THE FIRE CLAN!
HE MUST HAVE TAKEN A PRISONER!

SOME DEEP, UNRECOGNIZED PART OF TIROL HAD DARED DREAM OF A CASTLE BURSTING WITH ELVES, OF TENTS ERECTED IN THE COURTYARDS TO HOUSE THOSE THE CASTLE COULD NOT HOLD. HE BECOMES AWARE OF THIS UNSPOKEN DREAM ONLY AS THE DREAM DIES, FOR THE YARD IS ALL BUT EMPTY.

MUCH TO THE SURPRISE OF THE VISITING ELVES, TIROL INTRODUCES HIS COUSIN LON AS AN ALLY, AND LON IS GREETED WARMLY BY TIROL'S SISTER, SHARDA, AND HER HUSBAND, DOSKEN.

TONIGHT WE RAID THE LARDERS OF GRIMWOOD! TONIGHT ALL GRIEVANCES WILL BE SET ASIDE ...FOREVER!
TONIGHT WE FEAST TOGETHER AS ONE CLAN... UNITED IN MIGHT AND SPIRIT AGAINST THE ARMY OF MAN!

AS TIROL ACKNOWLEDGES THE POLITE CHEERS THAT GREET HIS ANNOUNCEMENT, HE SPIES A TINY FIGURE STRIVING DESPERATELY TO ATTRACT HIS ATTENTION.

TO BE CONTINUED·

KEVIN NOWLAN

KEVIN NOWLAN's career in comics began, believe it or not, when he submitted illustrations to *The Comics Journal*. *Journal* editor Gary Groth was so impressed by his work that he commissioned Kevin to do a cover of the X-Men, which appeared on the *Journal* #68. Kevin went on to do another *Journal* cover illustrating a feature article by Jan Strnad ("My Brilliant Career at Marvel"), but it was his first cover for the *Journal* that caught the eye of inker Terry Austin. Austin showed samples of Kevin's work at Marvel and soon Kevin was pencilling an issue of *Dr. Strange*, written by Roger Stern and inked by Austin.

Kevin went on to take over *Moon Knight* from Bill Sienkiewicz, an experience he regards as the most excruciatingly unpleasant and dissatisfying of his professional career. He discovered that working as a gun-for-hire, illustrating scripts for which he had no respect, turning out more art than he could comfortably (and conscientiously) handle, and being forced by publishing schedules to allow as many as four artists to ink a single story, was artistically debasing and depersonalizing. He worked off his professional commitment in three-and-a-half issues and promptly quit.

Despite Kevin's disillusionment over the level of his work at Marvel, he received sufficient critical acclaim to make him a "hot property." He was subsequently offered *Daredevil*, a *Nightcrawler* mini-series, and a *Long Shot* mini series from Marvel, all of which he turned down. He also rejected DC's offers to let him draw *Star Trek*, a *Batman* graphic novel, and an *Aquaman* mini-series. Kevin believes that the editorial attitudes of mass-market mainstream comics companies force creators into standardized modes of expression, and feels so adamant about this that he now limits his work for those companies to comparatively non-creative functions such as designing logos and lettering.

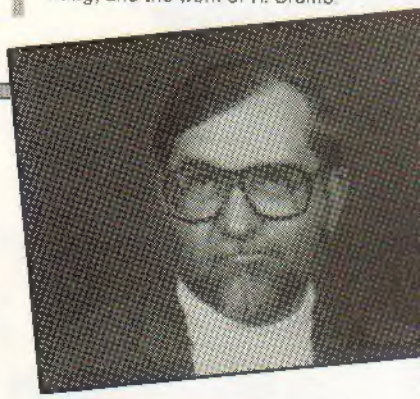
After *Moon Knight*, Kevin drew three short strips for the *National Lampoon*, a few covers and a full-color Dr. Strange poster for Marvel Comics, and, most recently, "Grimwood's Daughter."

About "Grimwood," Kevin feels it is his first work in the comics medium to which he feels a genuine affinity and a personal involvement. He views it as the real beginning of a deeper, more rewarding experience in comics.

Kevin was born in Chandron, Nebraska in 1958, entered the Salina, Kansas Area Vocational-Technical School after graduating from high school, where he learned basic layout, design, and reproduction techniques. After graduating from the two-year program, he took a job at a local printing firm creating and designing brochures, letterheads, and advertisements.

His interest in comics began as a youngster reading DC humor titles in the 1960s. Currently, he enjoys the work of Robert Crumb, Art Spiegelman, Harvey Kurtzman, Alex Toth, Jules Feiffer, and Edward Sorel. He doesn't read many comics, but those that he likes now include *Love and Rockets*, *Raw*, *American Splendor*, *Swamp Thing*, and the work of R. Crumb.

KENNETH SMITH



KENNETH SMITH was born in 1943 in Austin, Texas. His initial attraction to comics came from his exposure to EC Comics in the '50s, particularly the science-fiction titles. Through high school his interest turned toward science fiction, which he read voraciously. Near the end of his high school years he became the owner of an enormous collection of SF pulps and digests, exposing him to illustrators such as Finlay, Bok, Cartier, and Freas.

Ken studied art on his own and was first hired professionally as the political cartoonist on *The Texas Observer*, a liberal fortnightly. Eventually, his interest in science fiction led him to do artwork for the EC fanzines *Squa Tront* #3 and *Spa Fon* #5, as well as appearing in *witzend*, *Anomaly*, *Heritage*, *Reality*, and *Fantastic Fanzine*. The covers of *Creepy* and *Eerie*, SF paperbacks from Lancer and Ace all sported Kenneth Smith paintings in the early '70s.

The work for which Ken is best known among comics fans is the magazine *Phantasmagoria*, which he began publishing himself in the middle of 1971. *Phantasmagoria* was an impeccably produced magazine—adopting the values of a book rather than a periodical—that allowed Ken the opportunity to write and illustrate fables for which there was no other commercial outlet available.

Ken received his B.A. from the University of Texas in 1966. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. from Yale in 1972, where he specialized in 19th century European political philosophy. He went on to teach in the philosophy department at Louisiana State University, from which he recently retired, relocating to Dallas, Texas and starting an art agency.

Ken calls his drawing and painting "thoroughly experimental," and has worked extensively in many media, including oils, acrylics, watercolors, pencil, airbrush, pen, and charcoal. About his drawing, Ken has written:

"I generally strove for a plastic or sculptural effect which is the apex of illusionism—apparent or virtual 3-dimensionality—but to me this is not an end in itself but only an effect contributing to the surreality of the work, the power of art to make creative distortions of perception, to accentuate unseen potentials and extort otherworldy epiphanies out of worldly materials."

AFTERWORD

Let me extend my greetings, and welcome you to the pages of *Dal* #2. In addition to the deepening intrigue in "A Tendril Embrace," this issue introduces "Grimwood's Daughter," a five-part story by Dalgoda author Jan Strnad and artist Kevin Nowlan. "Grimwood's Daughter" is a somber accompaniment to Dal, giving the book a nice balance and showing off Jan's range as a writer. If you have a natural prejudice against elves, fight it. "Grimwood's Daughter" is serious business, and the elves are unlike any you've ever seen in comics. Remember that some of the best dramatic work done in American comics have couched the human element in symbolic terms: think of Art Spiegelman's mice and Barks's ducks, Walt Kelly's opossum and Reed Waller's cats. Add to the list the elves of Grimwood Forest.

Other business: the original artwork from Dalgoda and "Grimwood's Daughter" is available to collectors of comics art. (This includes the art from *Dal* #1.) Please send inquiries directly to me at **196 West Haviland Lane, Stamford CT 06903**. Pages are priced individually, so please include the specific page(s) you're interested in purchasing.

—Gary Groth

GRIMWOOD'S DAUGHTER

BY JAN STRNAD & KEVIN NOWLAN